

[R. L. Maddox]

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Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

R. L. Maddox was born in Grayson County, Texas April 12, 1867. He came to Runnels County in 1881, and settled at Runnels City. He also worked in Menard County. In 1889 he came back to Runnels County, married, and went to work as foreman on the Loomis ranch not far from Ballinger.

"I began riding and working cattle," Mr. Maddox says, "when just a lad. Jim Johnson was my first wagon boss. I had heard so many stories concerning Indians and buffalo in the West that I expected to see them roaming the prairies in large numbers. I later learned that the last band of Indians to pass through this section was in 1876, and the last buffalo was killed on Fuzzy Creek in 1878. About the only wild things left were coyotes, antelope, prairie chickens and prairie dogs. But they were plentiful.

"When I first came to Runnels, the Chisholm Trail passed a few miles east of Ballinger. Here or over this trail large herds of cattle were driven from points south, to northern markets. They kept moving the route west until they'd pass near where Ballinger now is and right by Runnels City, and on by the way of Cedar Gap and Abilene.

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"I have watched, fascinated by them when a boy, many large herds driven by our home. The biggest round-up that ever took place in Runnels County, happened in 1882 on this trail. I have seen many stampedes and helped to corral many herds of restless dogies, but this was the worst, the one that precipitated the big round-up. There were three of four large trail herds camped at this particular time, at different places along the trail over a distance of about fifteen miles, mainly on Fuzzy Creek. A very severe thunderstorm came up in the night and frightened the herds and threw them into a panic. They say there was a great hallabaloo as cowboys rode, yelled and sang to try to hold their herds together. It finally got 3 so nobody knew whose cattle they were chasing and they had to let 'em go. They went wild and scattered and mixed. Some wandered as far as fifteen miles from the starting place. It took several days for the trail men with some help to cut their brands and get the herds together again. It was estimated that there were 4,000 head in the round-up.

"I remember how the boys used to play practical jokes on the green hands. They'd get pretty rough sometimes, too. One of their favorite jokes was to grab a set of work harness, drag them through the camp at night, yelling, 'Whoa! Whoa! Stop 'em!' The tenderfoot would jump out of bed, of course, getting very much excited. Then how the other boys would laugh at him. I knew one old boy that didn't let any thing bother him, he wasn't afraid of anything that was connected with cow work, until it lightened. He simply would not leave the house or gang if a cloud was brewing.

"Dances were the chief place of amusement for us in the early days. I remember attending a dance near Paint Rock once. When I got there, there were five fiddlers present and no fiddle. I rode fifteen miles and brought back a fiddle. It was nearly midnight before we got started to dancing. The girls all wanted to go home about three o'clock, so we went out and turned their horses loose and danced 4 until after breakfast. Sometimes, and this was one of them, when we were short of girls and wanted to dance a square, some of us boys would tie a bandanna around our head or arm and take the place of the Miss.

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"The best bronc rider I ever knew was Booger Red, a familiar character in those days. Every cowboy had to be a good rider and many of them were busters.

"I knew one cowman, Fog Coffee, a son of an old Indian fighter who was very fond of playing practical jokes, and he would take a drink now and then, too. And you couldn't hardly get back at him at all, not even if he was drinking. I remember one time he came to Ballinger and got on a whiz. He was raising a right smart of trouble when the sheriff arrested him and undertook to take him to jail. Fog was on his horse and Sheriff Farmwalt was holding the reins, and going in the direction of the jail. Fog suddenly had a bright idea. He very quietly slipped the bridle off his horse's head and beat it for home, leaving the much surprised officer holding the bridle."

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

R. L. Maddox, Ballinger, Texas, interviewed, January 23, 1938. 1 Beliefs and Customs - Occupational lore

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COWBOY LORE

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R. L. MADDOX was born in Grayson ounty County , Texas, April 12, 1867. He came to Runnels County in 1881, and settled at Runnels City. A few months after coming to Runnels, he went to work for Jim Johnson a prominent stockman at that time and until his death in [?]. [?] He also worked on The O O ranch in Menard county. In 1889 he came back to Runnels County, married , and went to work as foreman on / The Loomis ranch not far from Ballinger.

"I began riding and working cattle," Mr. Maddox says, "when just a lad. Jim Johnson was my first wagon boss. I had heard so many stories concerning Indians and / Buffalo in the West that I expected to see them roaming the prairies in large numbers. I later learned that the last band of Indians to pass though this section was in 1876, and the -1876 last buffalo was killed on Fuzzy Creek in 1878. About the -1878 only wild [?] things left were [?] / Coyotes, / Antelope, prairie chickens and prairie dogs. But they were plentiful. Last Indians Last Buffalo " When I first came to Runnels, / The Chisholm trail Trail passed a few miles east of Ballinger. Here or over this trail large herds of cattle were driven from points southe south, to northern markets. They kept moving the route west until / They'd pass near where Ballinger now is and right by Runnels City. And on by - the - way of Cedar gap Gap and Abilene. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Maverick Texas

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horse and Sheriff Farmwalt was holding the reins, and going in / the direction of the jail. Fog suddenly had a bright idea. 4 He very quietly slipped the bridle off his horses head and beat it for home , leaving the much surprised officer holding the bridle. “ “ I worked as foreman on the Loomis ranch until 1917, then I moved to Ballinger and have worked as a salesman ever since. I traveled many years for a firm in Chicago. I am now employee for Kirk And Mack Hardware Co. of Ballinger.